

Art Ducko ^{#10}

DIVERSITY ISSUE



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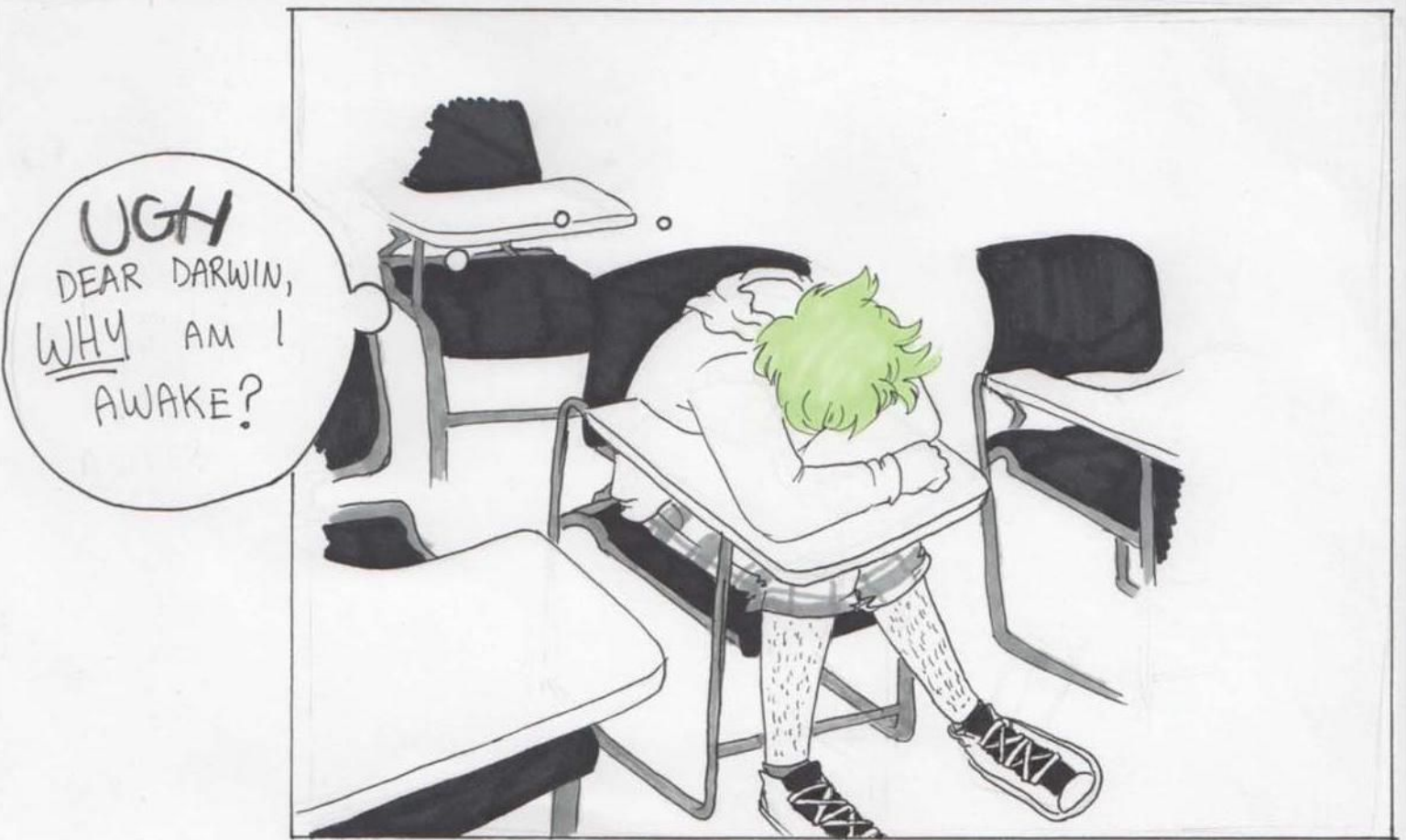
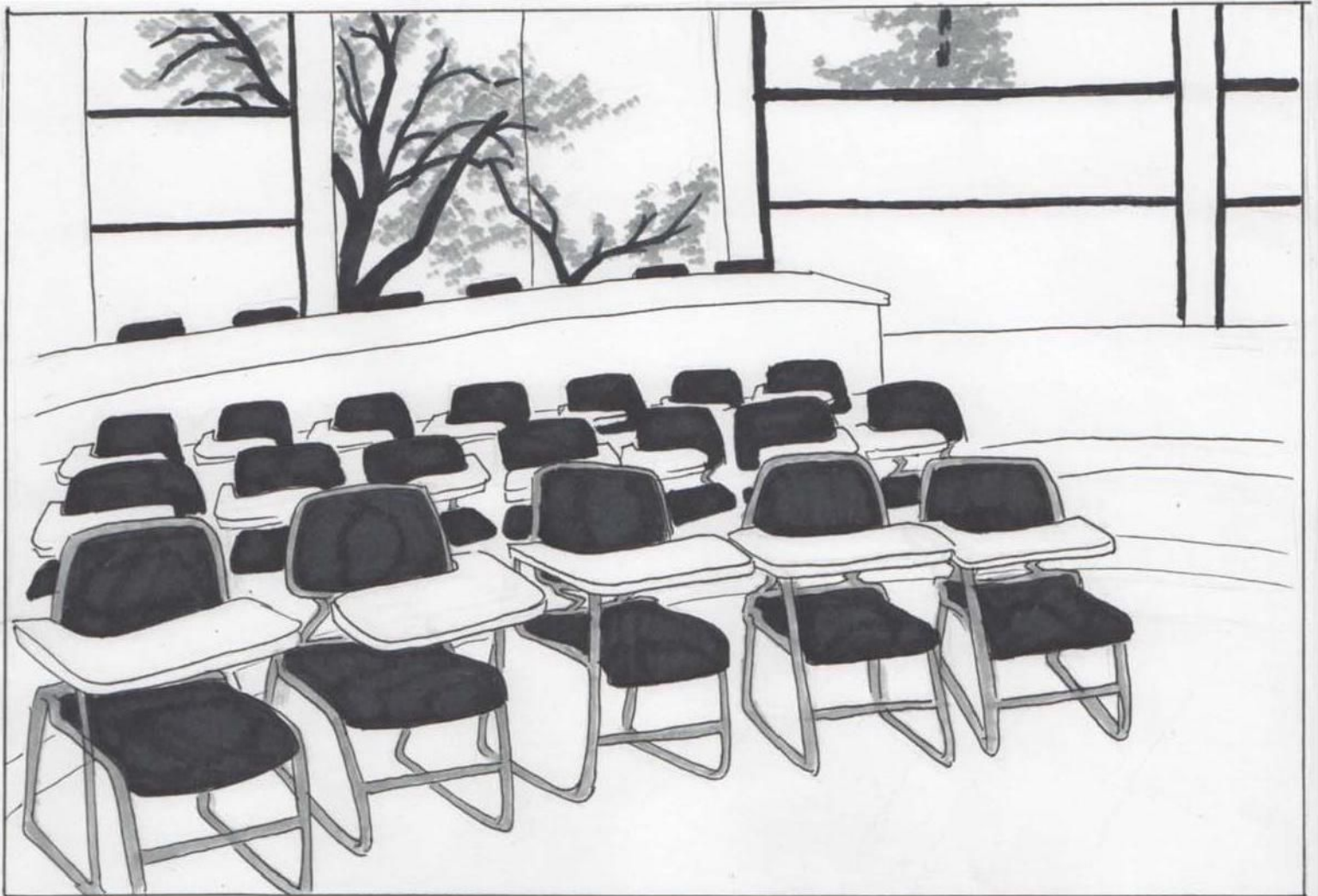
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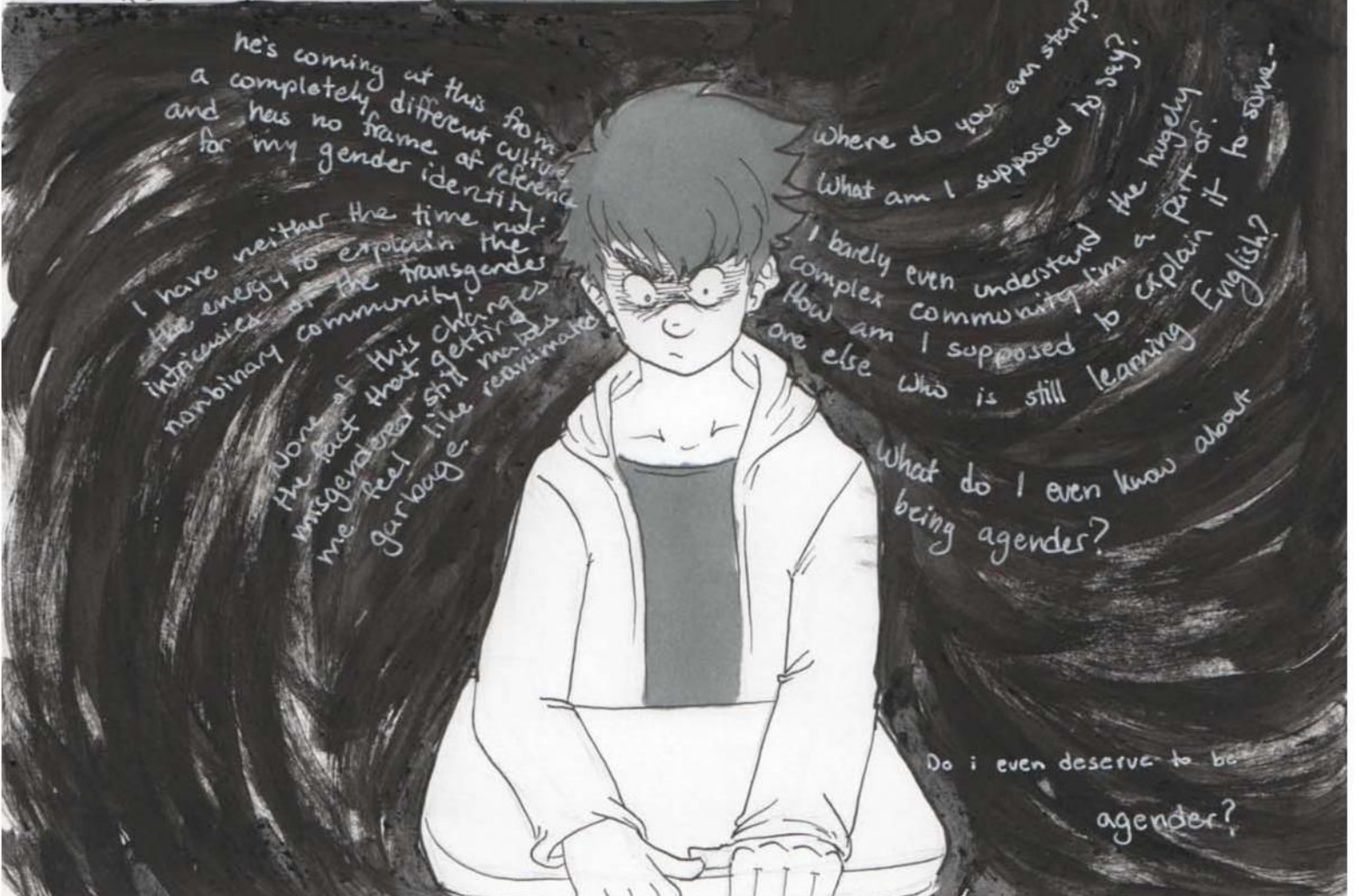
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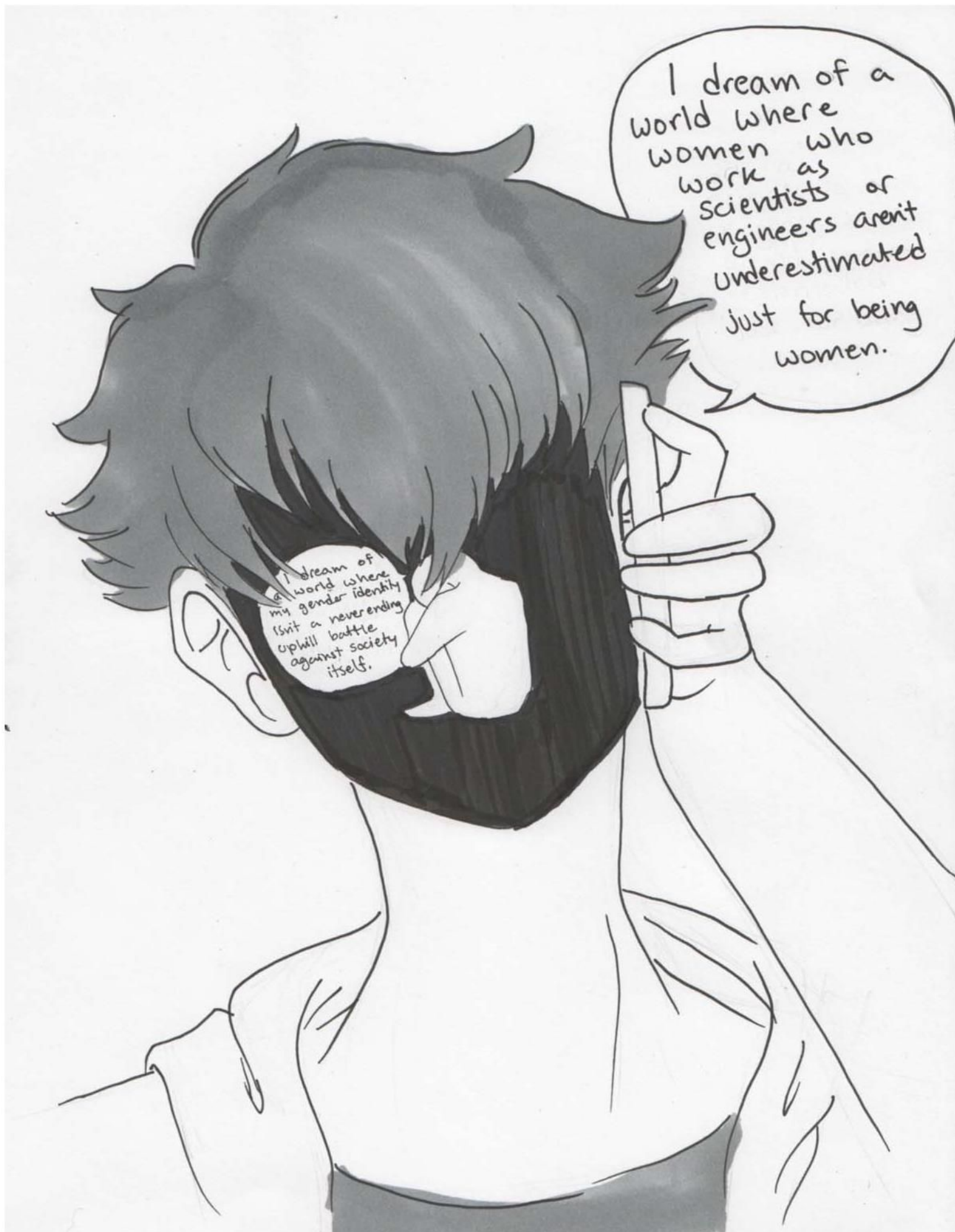
39 Kitsch is Emotional Too

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I wonder if I should
look into testosterone
hormone therapy. I'm
already having enough
trouble paying for school,
so I don't know how
I'd find the money,
but-

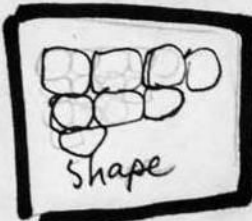
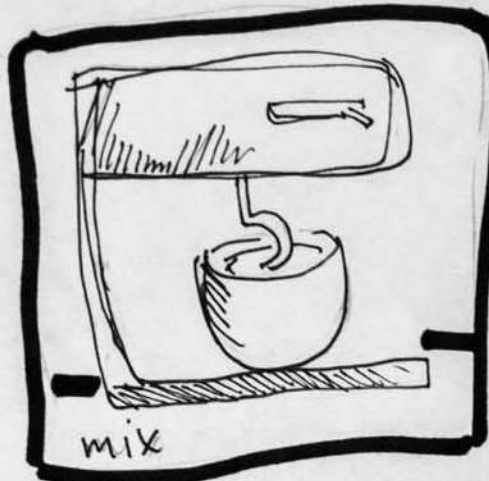
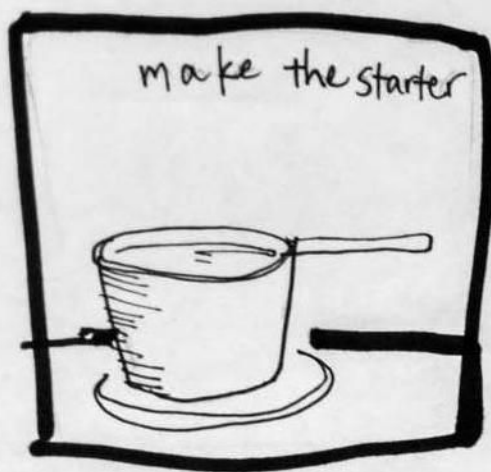
maybe it'd be worth it if it
made stuff like this stop
happening.



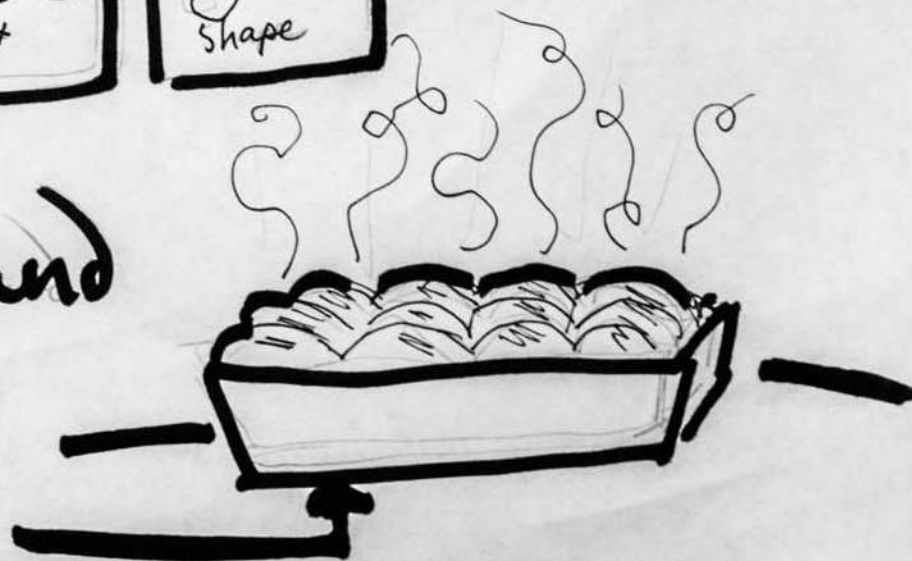
MAKING BREAD

by Keria Setyawan





Bake and
then
Rest



fin

in the end, it's best to share with those you love

THE ADVENTURE

OF

A
MIDDLE SCHOOL
MAN

BASED
ON
A TRUE
STORY

THE
REIGN
OF
MS
ROWE

BY: AIDEN
ULLMAN

Approaching the end of his 8th grade year, A Middle School Man attended his 3rd period Spanish One class as usual...

*intercom
"Now beginning
3rd period."



Ms. Rowe was a sworn nemesis of AMSM and was always out to get him.

BLAH, BLAH, BLAH,
FINAL PROJECT
COMING UP

The class itself could've actually been pretty enjoyable if it wasn't for Ms. Rowe, the teacher...

However, with the announcement of a final project, AMSM had an idea...

AMSM

"I'll blow her out of the water. If I ace this project I'll shut her up for good."



THE WORK
GRIND BEGAN...

THIS IS GONNA
BE GOOD

AMSM slaved away to craft a project that would bring his teacher foe to her knees.

FINALLY

The project was finished and the due date had come. Hours of work, hundreds of ideas... ALL manifested into a beautiful final spanish project that would serve as a weapon of mass destruction against the dreaded Ms. Rowe.

AMSM marched his way toward victory...

"Looks snazzy"

Wow!

So cool!

Since you're so enthusiastic Mr. Ullman you can present your project first.

AMSM's enemy was scheming, however, her plays would be no match for AMSM's secret weapon...

Oh yeah... Sure I'll go first

All affairs were in order..
It was time.

*SPANISH

What ensued is perhaps the
most devastating turn of events
of all time.

He cleared
his throat..

*COUGH

...and
began.

What?

Did he
really...

he couldn't have...

Huh?

AMSM had relied on Google Translate
to complete his project... The words
coming out of his mouth as he
presented to the class were
nothing more than slues of
Spanish jibberish.

Needless to say, Ms. Rowe Caught on...

Google Translate
using rat!

F!

You get an

F

The letter F was going through
his mind too... only it didn't
stand for fail.

NOOOOOOOOO

AMSM's seemingly

perfect weapon of destruction was
left in shambles after being blasted
with a verbal barage from Ms.
Rowe. Never would AMSM trust Google
Translate to help him with a Spanish
project again. AMSM was left
beaten... and betrayed

TO
BE
CONTINUED

The Rise of Representation in Comics

Conducted by Bianca Sandoval

Irene Koh is an artist who is currently working as the artist of The Legend of Korra comics series. She has worked for publishers such as Dark Horse, Marvel, and DC. Some of the series she has worked on previously include The Secret Loves of Geek Girls, Secret Origins #10: Batgirl, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Casey and April. To check out more of her work, visit her website at <http://koh.money/>.



Art Ducko: How did you end up as the artist for the Avatar: The Legend of Korra comics series?

Irene Koh: I had been sort of shouting into the void that is Twitter dot com for a while half-jokingly declaring myself the best person for the job, haha. A friend was actually offered the gig first after Brittney Williams stepped down, which she also turned

down, but in turn referred me. I did an art test, and boom, here we are. I feel like all my years of poring over shounen fight manga and also a decade plus of practicing martial arts prepared me for the gig, heh.

AD: What drew you to the series?

IK: I was a huge fan of ATLA and Korra before I got the job. It's sad, but it blew my mind that there was an American cartoon about a fantasy Asian world

for kids. I'm a huge martial arts nerd so that was a no-brainer, and the fantasy element was definitely an initial draw. I got a season deep into ATLA when I realized I liked it for far more than just the fighting, though. The series has a rich cast of nuanced characters that often doesn't dumb itself down for its young audience, and I think that that is powerful.

AD: Is there any comic that inspired you to be in this career?

IK: I started drawing because of Sailor Moon, but thematically the most formative comic series was probably Magic Knight Rayearth. There are tons of Japanese and French comics that have inspired me to tell stories, and to specifically appreciate the craft of comic making; it'd be difficult to name them all. I'll boil my inspirations down to: the sincerity and potency of femininity from shoujo and josei manga; the joy of timeless fight scenes from shounen manga (and French homages to the genre like Lastman); and the absolute care that goes into the polish of bandes dessinées.

“The series has a rich cast of nuanced characters that often doesn't dumb itself down for its young audience, and I think that that is powerful.”



AD: Your website bio says that you have lived in places such as Seoul, Tokyo, and San Francisco. Do you think that living in all these different places has affected your art, and if so, how?

IK: Growing up as a kid in Tokyo definitely set my life on the path for art. I was young and enamored with anime and manga, and that fueled my need to draw every day.

AD: How do you feel about representation within the comics industry as a whole? Is it difficult to enter the industry as a member of a marginalized community?

IK: I think representation in mainstream comics is... improving. There is certainly far more diversity among creators than before. But unless the bigots at the top aren't replaced by folks who share the vision of a diverse future for comics, things will continue to change at an incremental rate. As for entering: Probably, as with most things. My break into comics was extremely fortunate, and I have also deliberately represented myself online as an artist whose work reflects her politics. Maybe I didn't receive certain jobs I could have if I'd been quieter about that stuff, but also... maybe I didn't want to be working with those people in the first place.

AD: When you receive job offers, how does the content and history of the story/franchise affect your decision?

IK: As stated above, I'm an artist who cannot separate her politics from her body of work. And this is not a dig at anyone who takes a job to pay the bills (because hey, we've all been there), but when I went into comics, I told myself I needed to be selective about the work I took on. It's both helped me avoid unsavory situations, and also to groom a certain image of the work I make/am involved in. One of the better pieces of advice I ever received was to make the work I want to be hired for, so that's what I try to do.

AD: Do you feel that the comics and animation industry is changing in regards to various forms of representation?

IK: Yes. Even if they didn't end up getting to show the kiss on television, Korra and Asami's overtly romantic ending to the series was a big step. Shows like *Steven Universe* are changing the game, and I think studios are realizing that this audience is starved for content. I'm looking forward to seeing how it progresses.

AD: Do you have any advice for creators of color and/or female creators who would like to enter the comics industry?

- IK:**
1. Make the work you want to be hired for.
 2. Approach finishing something as a skill as much as anything else.
 3. Constantly be creating things.
 4. Be kind. Lift up your colleagues.
 5. Unapologetically be yourself, and let your work do the rest of the talking.

“My break into comics was extremely fortunate, and I have also deliberately represented myself online as an artist whose work reflects her politics.”

AD: How can a reader and fan encourage diverse storytelling with a comic book company?

IK: Buy 'em! Email 'em, tweet at 'em, anything. Voting with your wallet is probably the most concrete and data-driven way to let companies know what kind of content you want, but (polite) social media nudges go a long way, too.

AD: What are your future projects?

IK: I don't want to reveal too much yet, but a few fun things and then an original, just-me kinda project. :) Stay tuned (@kohquette) for any announcements!

“Unapologetically be yourself, and let your work do the rest of the talking.”



对不起

我的中文

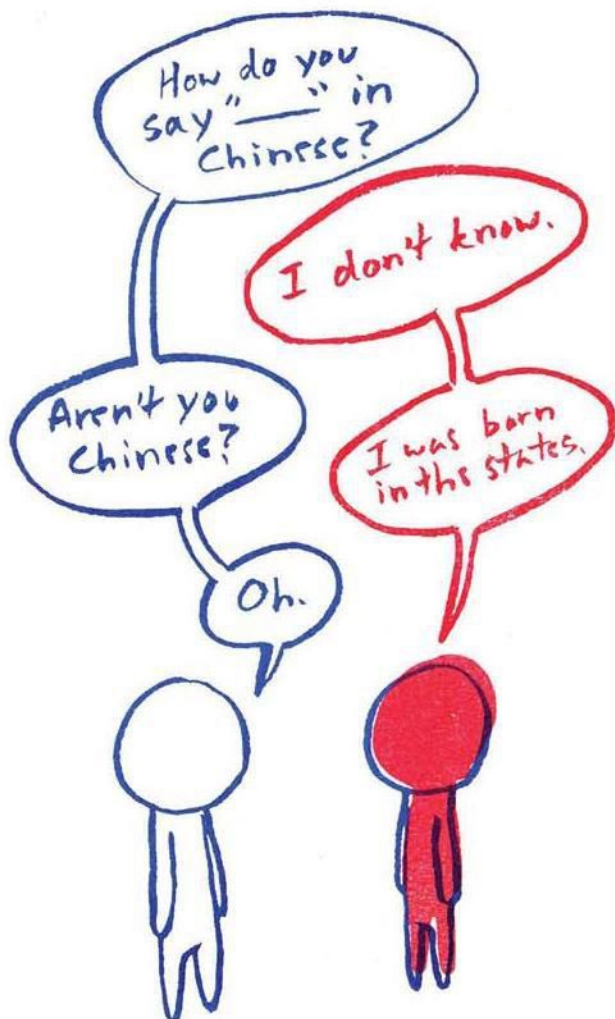
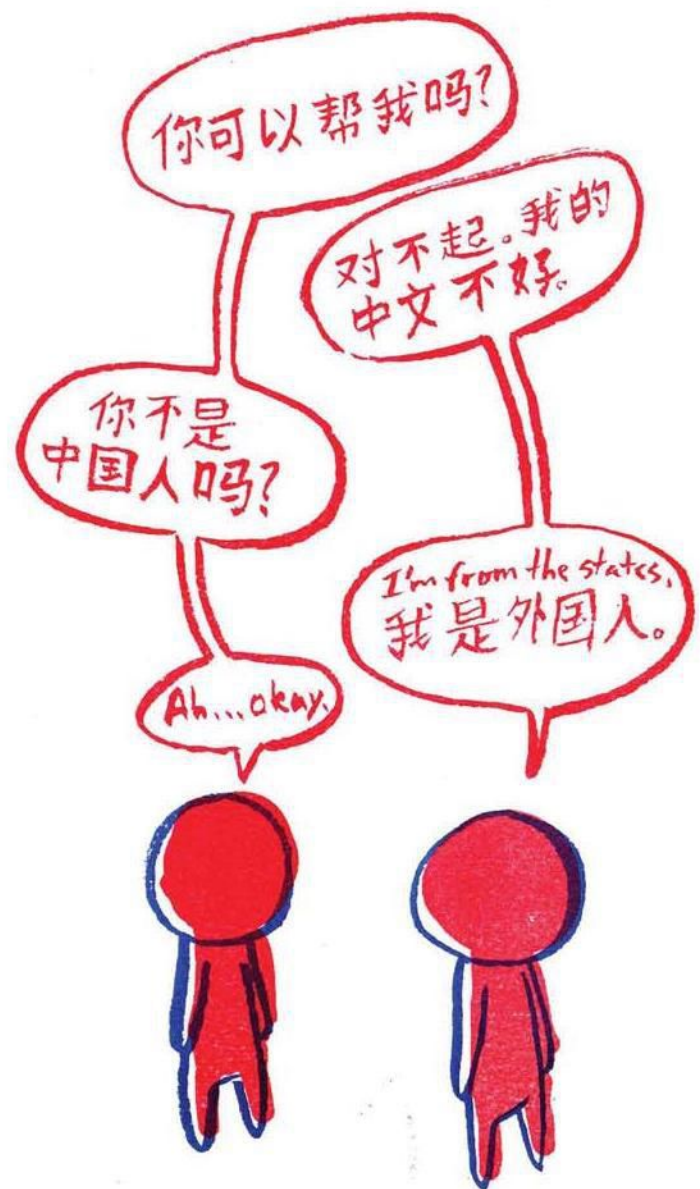
不好。

我的名字是蔡博德。

我二十一岁在大学学习艺术。

我正在尽全力学习中文。







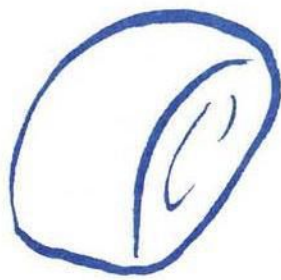


小笼包

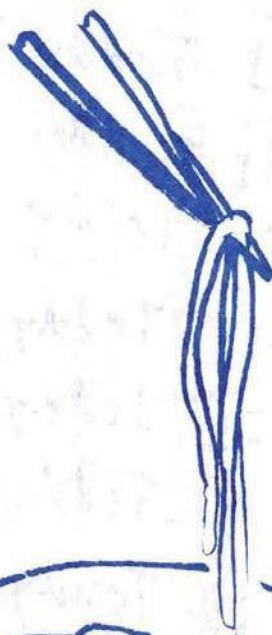


水饺





馒头



牛肉面



SORRY
MY CHINESE
IS BAD.

My name is Teddy Tsai.
I am 21 and study art in school.
I am trying my very best to learn Chinese.



Can Identity Be Proven?

A Meditation on Crypto-Jewish Identity in New Mexico in El Iluminado

By Lauren Bryant

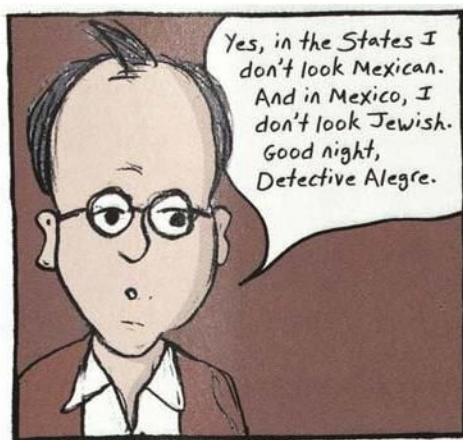
Jewish populations have a long (but sometimes overlooked) history in the Spanish-speaking world. From their time in medieval Spain to their settlement in the New World during Spanish colonization, they have faced persecution, some of which made them all but disappear in the eyes of the public. In an effort to promote religious unity (of the Catholic faith), the Spanish Inquisition of the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries targeted Jews, expelling them from the country or forcing them to convert (Fuentes 81). But this vanishing act may not have been as absolute as their persecutors may have thought; though they were banned from crossing over into the Americas during the fifteenth century, the Jewish population and their traditions lived on in secret there (Fuentes 138). This survival was a result of people hiding their identities and becoming “crypto-Jews,” or people who practice Judaism in secret (Stavans 11-2). They were forced to do so by the heavy hand of the Spanish Inquisition, which remained suspicious of anyone who might be Jewish, regardless of whether they had converted or not (Fuentes 77). This drove them deeper into hiding in order to escape severe punishment from Spain, and as a result their identities became so hidden that sometimes later generations weren’t even aware of their heritage (Stavans 13).

However, in the modern day, a process of rediscovery has begun. People started to wonder why their families lit a candle on Fridays or didn’t eat pork, despite being Catholic. Soon, people were reclaiming their Jewish heritage, catching the attention of their (sometimes) disapproving families and the world of academics, which rushed into the debate of who was and wasn’t Jewish. This sets the stage for the graphic novel *El Iluminado*, written by professor Ilan Stavans and illustrated by Steve Sheinkin. The book is about a murder mystery deeply entrenched in the issues of crypto-Jews in New Mexico. Rolando Pérez,

a man convinced he has found a document proving the Jewish heritage of New Mexico, falls to his death. His cousin, Irina, enlists the help of Professor Stavans to solve what she believes to be a murder committed over the unknown documents. On their quest to find the papers, they meet many other crypto-Jews, who reveal the struggles of coming out as Jewish after generations of hiding. This process is not easy for them; because people were forced to obscure their religious and ethnic identity before, the past is blurred, making it harder for people to defend their new identities against skeptics who for whatever reason don’t believe that these people are really Jewish. Because of this, the characters in *El Iluminado* struggle to find some proof of their identity, often through physical evidence that can be found in documents and DNA. The text, however, questions the assumption that identity must be based on some concrete fact, and purposefully doesn’t grant the characters the manifest record they want. The necessity of physical proof for one’s self-perception is challenged, leaving the reader with a shaky, inconclusive idea of whether identity is based on fact or fiction, and whether it matters in the end.



The conflicts of the novel center around the shakiness of the characters’ identities, which is revealed through their conversations. When Stavans sits in with a crypto-Jewish support group that Rolando was a part of, they share with him the obstacles they face when they try to come forward with their new identity. One man says that other



Jewish people tell them that they're "not real Jews, [they're] not from the right place, [and they] don't look right" (Stavans 86). This passage addresses a lot of the issues cryp-

to-Jews face. First, they are confronted with the problematic idea of "real" and "fake" Jews; the non-converts seem to have a definition for what makes someone Jewish, and apparently the cast of *El Iluminado* does not fit the bill. Even Stavans struggles with this; he at one point says that "in the States [he doesn't] look Mexican. And in Mexico, [he doesn't] look Jewish" (Stavans 31). This reveals how much credence people put into appearance in judging identity, and how that is affected by the surrounding society and their assumptions. This begs the question: What makes someone Jewish? From Stavans's own experience and the rest of the gentleman's statement, the audience can infer some of the qualifications people expect, such as place of origin and phenotype. This can be further complicated when one considers that Jewishness can be a religious or ethnic descriptor, meaning they have to prove both things. Though the support group is confident in their sense of self, the rest of the world is not so sure, and thus they are not granted any stability. They are given the difficult task of finding proof of their identity, or else not being taken seriously. Because of this, their identities are in flux, as they are unable to solidify their position as Jews in the eyes of society.

"The messy art style of El Iluminado could be on purpose, meant to reflect the messy reality of coming out as a crypto-Jew."

The shaky ground they tread on is not only expressed through their dialogue, but through the way they're illustrated. Everyone in the book is drawn with wobbly lines and colors that occasionally bleed out of the lines or aren't filled in completely. This can be seen in figure 1 if examined closely; for example, the collar of the man's shirt has white splotches on it, and a line strays from the confines of the right flap. This is a rather unusual art style in the world of (published) comics, which tend to favor a more polished look. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that the artist, Sheinkin, did this without thought. According to Scott McCloud in his book *Understanding Comics*, in the twentieth century people like the artist and theorist Wassily Kandinsky began to recognize that things like line quality and color can be used to express emotion (McCloud 123). McCloud then gives several examples of how line quality can contribute to the mood of comics (McCloud 126). If this is true, then the messy art style of *El Iluminado* could be on purpose, meant to reflect the messy reality of coming out as a crypto-Jew. Just as their identities are unstable, so too are their bodily forms. The abstract struggle for identity is made visible to the eye, and thus the audience can see how difficult it can be to present a polished image of oneself to the world. By depicting the characters in this way, the text reinforces the uncertainty the characters are forced to face when they are unable to prove to others that their identity is concrete.



The skepticism the crypto-Jews endure drives them to find the physical proof demanded of them in an effort to make their identity real to themselves and to others. While Stavans continues to sit in on the support group's meeting, the conversations among the members show the pressure they feel to find factual evidence to back up their identity, even when they already feel certain of who they are. In this scene, we see a quick shift in the ways the crypto-Jews identify

themselves. The old woman claims that “when you have [a Jewish soul], you know,” suggesting that simply believing in your identity is enough to validate it (Stavans 87). However, this statement is immediately followed by her companions discussing the importance of genetic markers in proving their ethnicity. Apparently, self-identifying as Jewish is not enough; crypto-Jews feel the need to prove themselves through genetic testing, which can be a bit of a costly venture. Why put in the extra work to find genotypic proof of identity, something that normally is considered very personal and up to the individual? Where has the need for physical proof come from? The speed at which they leap to explain themselves after the old lady’s abstract remark suggests that to be acknowledged by the wider public, identity has to be more than a feeling. All the skepticism they face has forced them to see identity as something that needs physical evidence to be taken seriously. It is this pressure that makes them so eager to find something like Rolando’s documents, which they hope will further solidify their position in the eyes of society. If his document really did prove the Jewish ancestry of the people of New Mexico, then they might be able to reassure themselves and the community that they are telling the truth.

“All the skepticism they face has forced them to see identity as something that needs physical evidence to be taken seriously.”

However, no matter how adamantly the characters chase it, proof of Jewish identity ends up being harder to find than they anticipate. Though the whole novel is spent chasing the documents, when the characters finally find them, Rolando’s cousin Irina steals and hides them again, believing that now is not a good time to reveal them (Stavans 184). Though this is frustrating to everyone involved, it ultimately puts into doubt the helpfulness of physical evidence. After this turn of events, Stavans meditates on what the point of the whole chase was. He decides that “the mere fact that some truth was there to be found made the quest alluring” (Stavans 189). All the characters

“Crypto-Jews like her are made to keep on chasing after more and more testimonies to prove themselves, and yet they can never truly find all the evidence they need to convince a skeptic.”

were so drawn to the idea that identity could be proven that they got caught up in the mystery. Despite this, the documents never yielded anything, and the hunt failed to provide anyone with proof of anything. This is aggravating to academics like Stavans and his rival, Professor Contreras, whose job it is to support their research with primary documents, but it also frustrates the people whose identities are at stake. The young woman from the support group is angry that she never got to see the documents, likely because she feels that she and the others in the crypto-Jewish community deserve to know about their own history. However, it could also serve as more proof to the world of who they, the crypto-Jews, really are. If that’s the case, a nagging question remains: Why did this woman need the documents, if she already had DNA evidence of her ancestry? It would seem that even having one kind of proof isn’t enough; crypto-Jews like her are made to keep on chasing after more and more testimonies to prove themselves, and yet they can never truly find all the evidence they need to convince a skeptic. Thus the hunt for physical proof seems fruitless; though the idea is appealing, it never seems to work out for the characters it’s supposed to help.

Despite this disappointment, the text ends by concluding that it may not matter after all what someone’s justification for their identification is, and that people’s personal beliefs can be just as important as factual evidence. In the beginning of the book, Stavans asks many questions like “Are people what they say they are?” and “Who should be in charge of deciding if these acknowledgements are genuine?” (Stavans 15). His choice to bring up these questions in the first place challenges the idea that there is one “correct” way to identify people. He understands that these are compli-

“No matter how much people try to emphasize the facts in identifying someone, personal perception will always be an important, unavoidable factor.”

cated questions, and chooses to accept the uncertainty that comes with them. Though he doesn't answer his own questions then, he shares some opinions later that enlighten the audience about his thoughts on truth and history. He claims that everyone is “constantly reshaping [their] own narratives” and that “people create stories to survive, to affirm who they are, to make a stand” (Stavans 107). Here, he goes against the ideas of evidence and hard facts that the crypto-Jews have been struggling with, and instead emphasizes the importance of narratives to the individual. He validates the perspectives of people like the old woman from the support group, who place importance on the way they feel and how that affects their identity. To him, it doesn't seem so important whether the general population believes a crypto-Jew's story because it's more significant that the person has constructed an identity that lets them traverse the world in a way that works for them. His view challenges the reader to consider whether the book's conflict over proving the existence and identities of crypto-Jews is a necessary process for individuals to define themselves.

El Iluminado traverses complicated issues of identity and embraces the ambiguity of public and self-perception. Though the quest for proof of Jewish identity ends up being a wild goose chase, Stavans does not perceive this as a loss. He uses the opportunity to challenge what people think identity is and how it

can be proved, giving credence to the idea that people create their own identities. Of course, people shouldn't just arbitrarily claim identities, especially ethnic ones; however, identity is largely based on how one perceives themselves, and making people jump through hoops to satisfy society's expectations of what that is can be an endless rabbit hole. No matter how much people try to emphasize the facts in identifying someone, personal perception will always be an important, unavoidable factor.



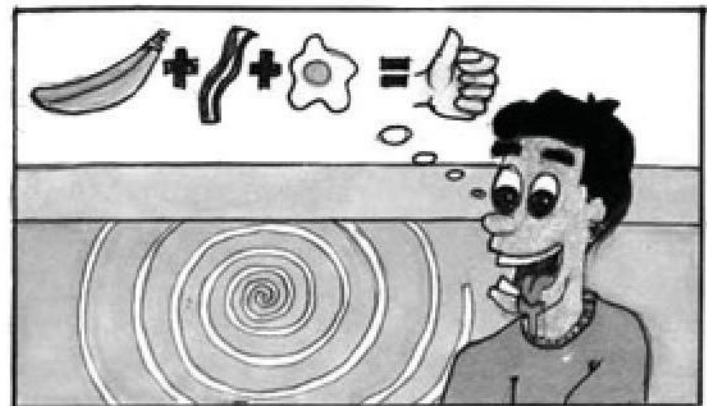
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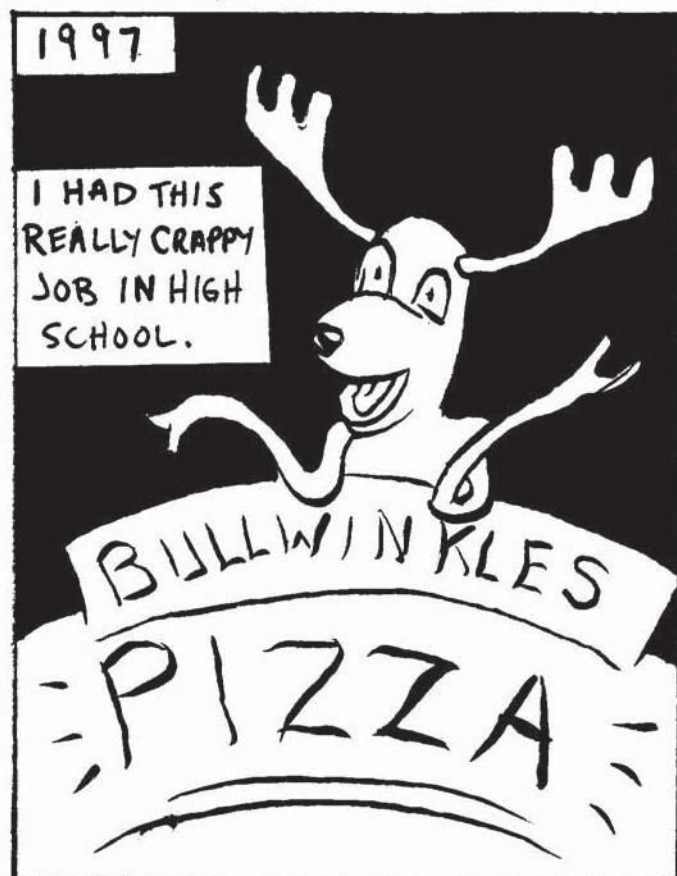
BREAKFAST

"desayuno"

With Ms. Juanita



HOBART By Casey Brillon



SOMETIMES WE WOULD HANG OUT
BY THE HOBART AND TELL STORIES.

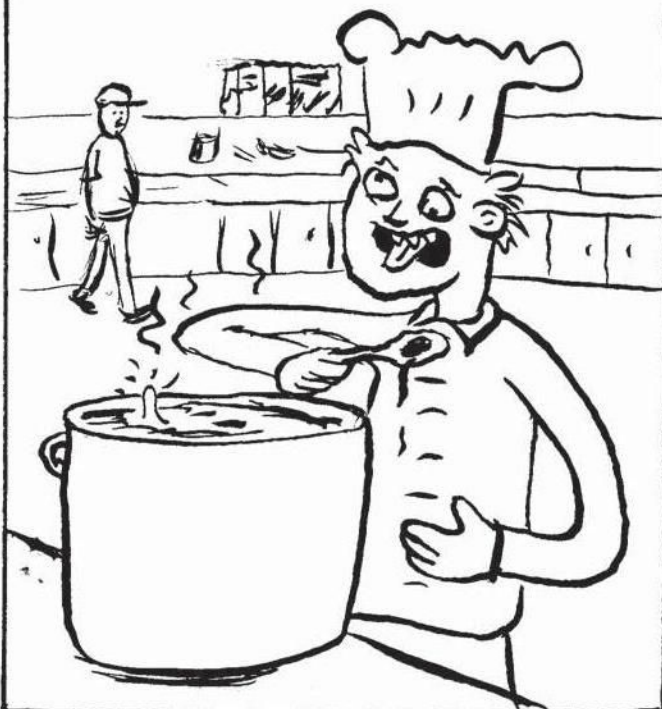




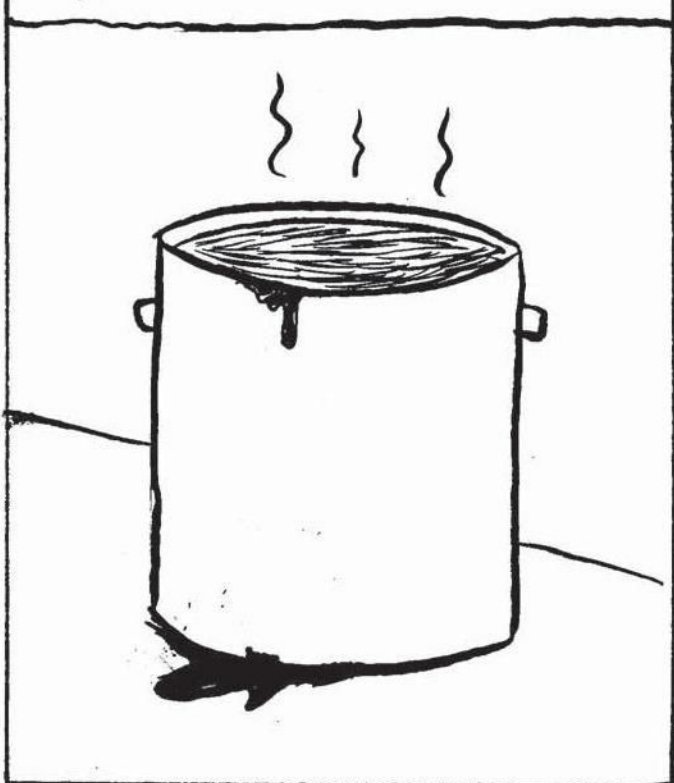
THIS WASN'T GOING
TO WORK FOR ME.



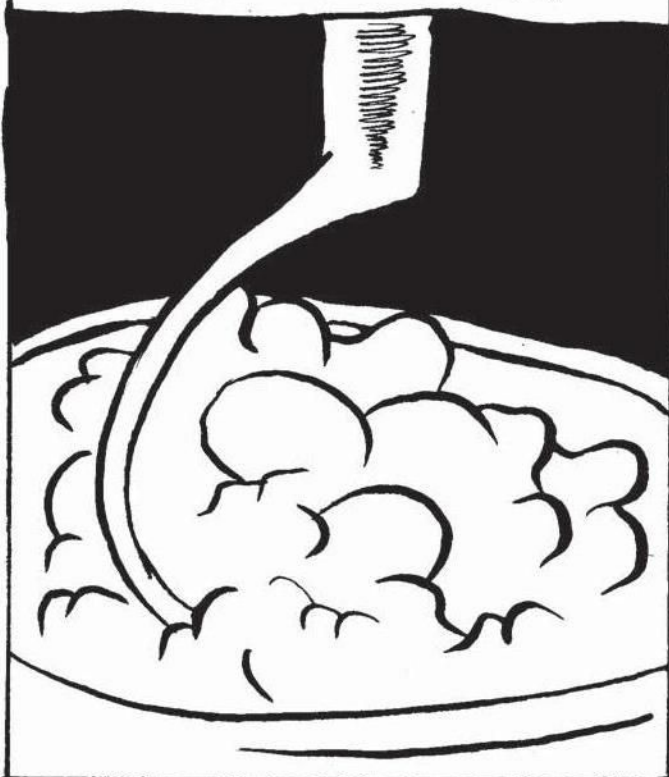
I BEGAN TO TAKE NOTE
OF MY SURROUNDINGS.



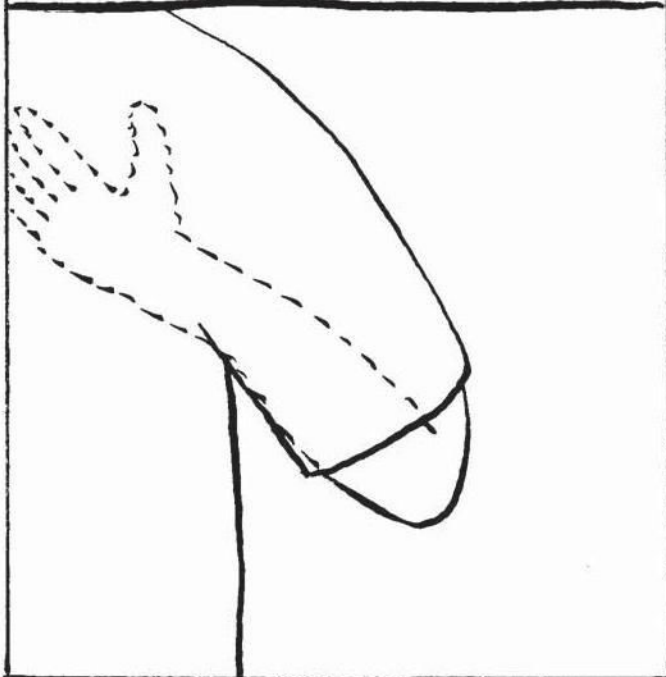
PIZZA SAUCE



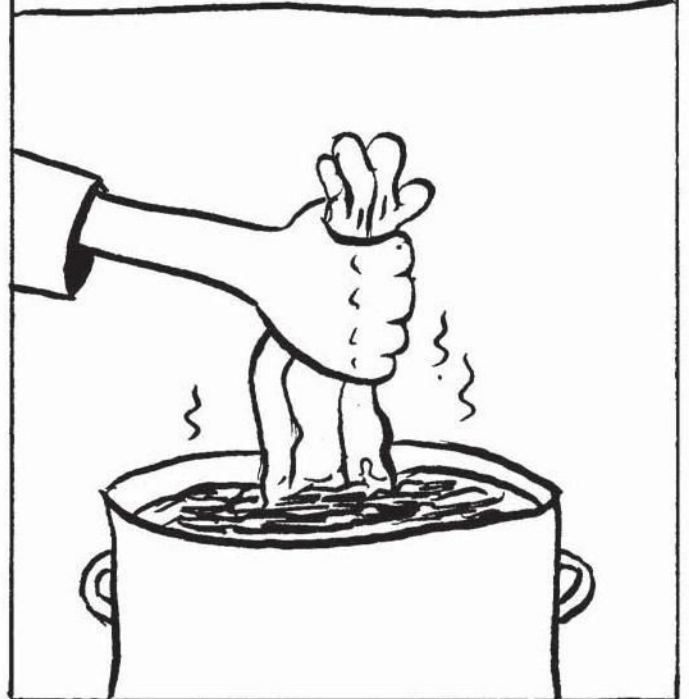
PIZZA DOUGH



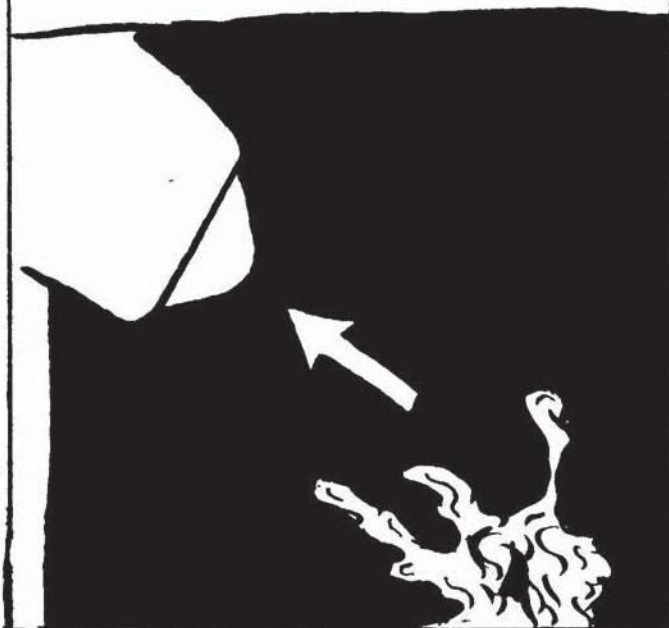
FIRST I SLIPPED MY
ARM INTO MY SLEEVE.



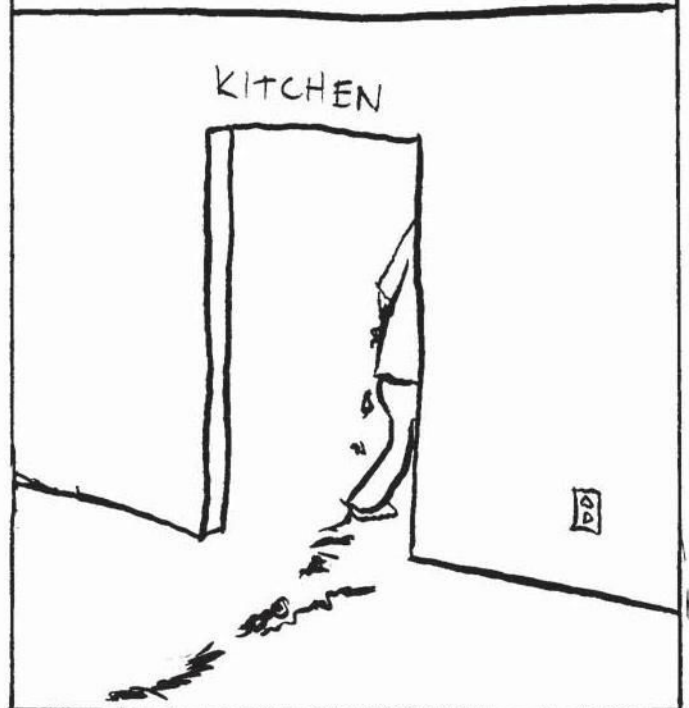
THEN I DIPPED DOUGH
STRIPS INTO THE SAUCE.



I INSERTED THE SLOPPY
MESS INTO MY ARM
STUMP.



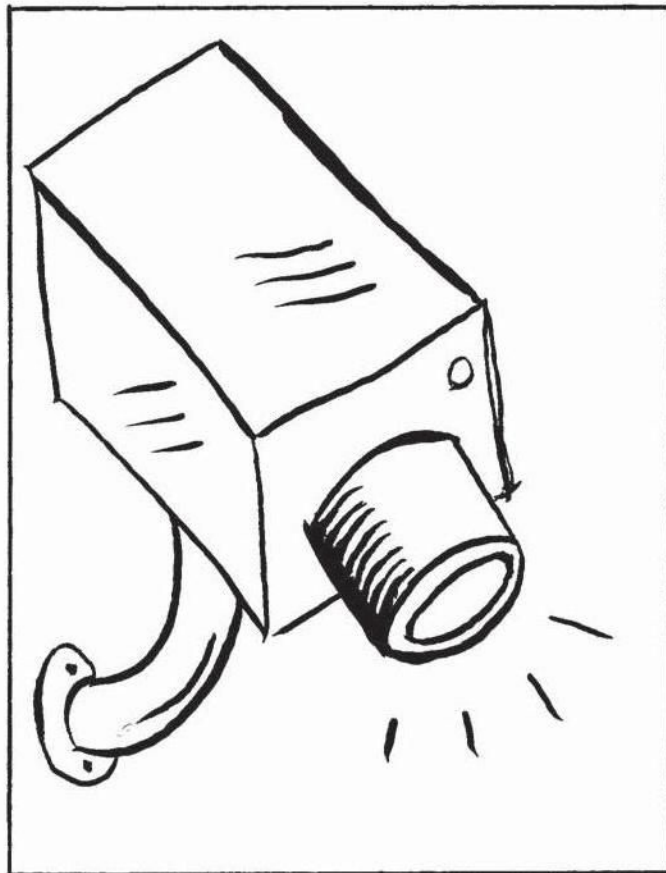
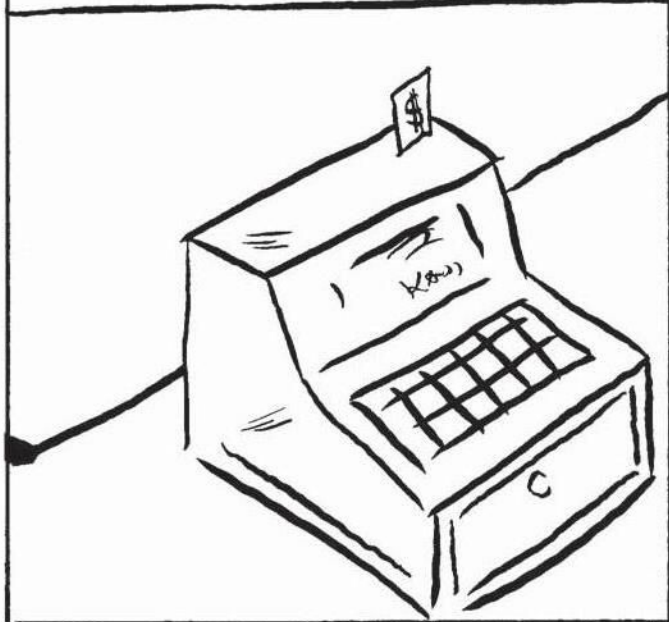
THEN I WENT FOR
A WALK.





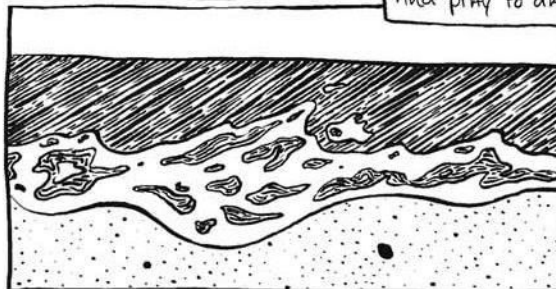
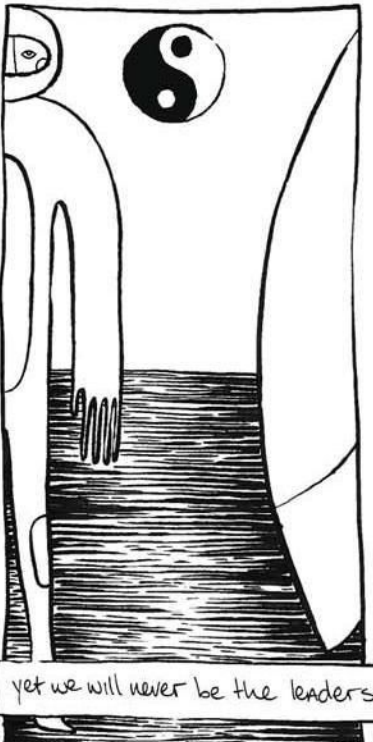
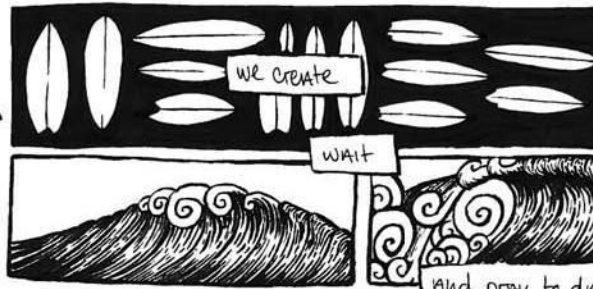
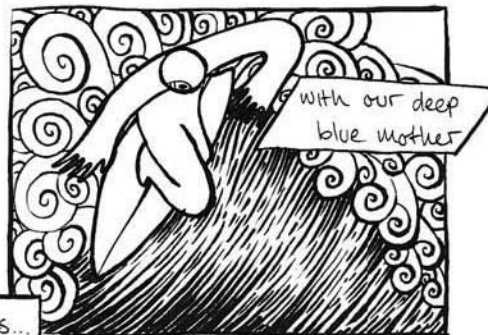
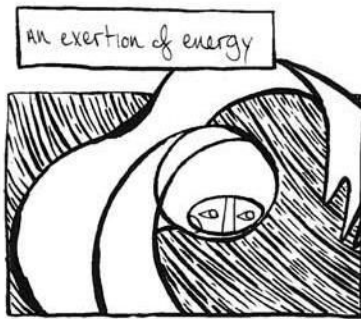


SHORTLY AFTER THAT
I WAS TRAINED ON
THE CASH REGISTER.



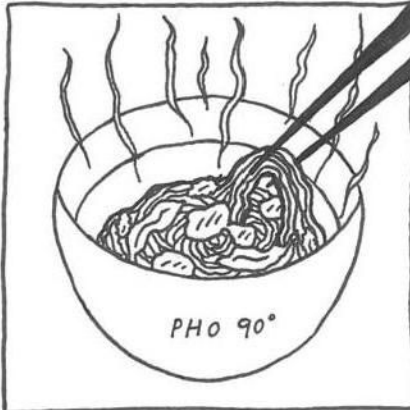
21 JAN 1997 | | | | | | | | | 1:15 PM





"KITSCH IS EMOTIONAL, TOO"

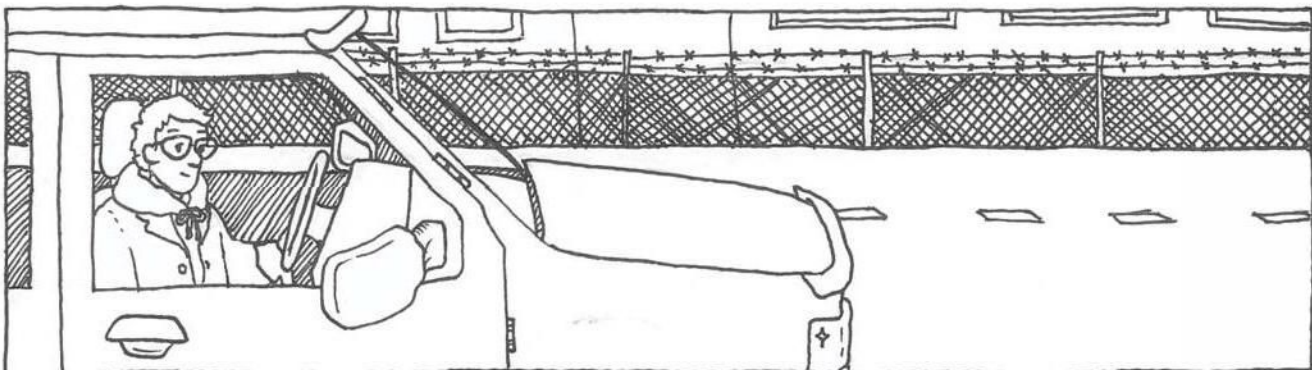
by FIONA DE LOS RIOS



Over winter break, my parents announced they were leaving my hometown of San Jose.

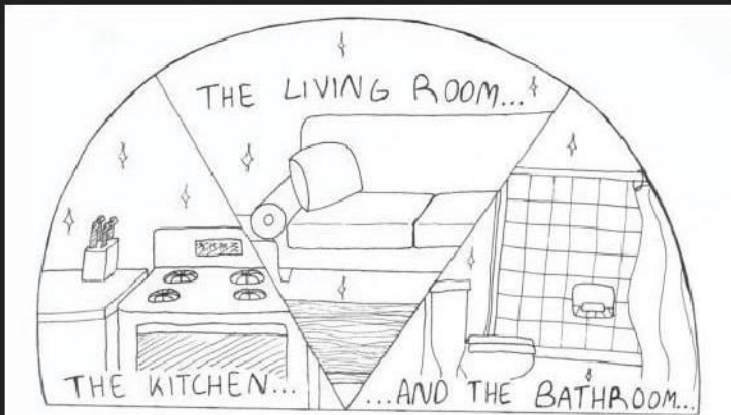


I wasn't particularly emotional about the news and spent 3 weeks mostly sleeping.

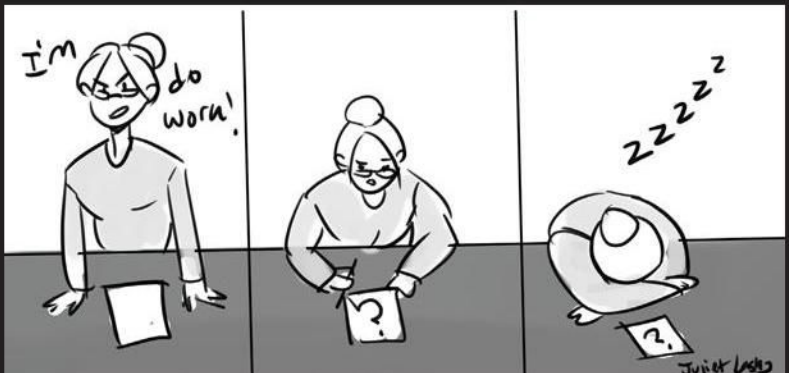
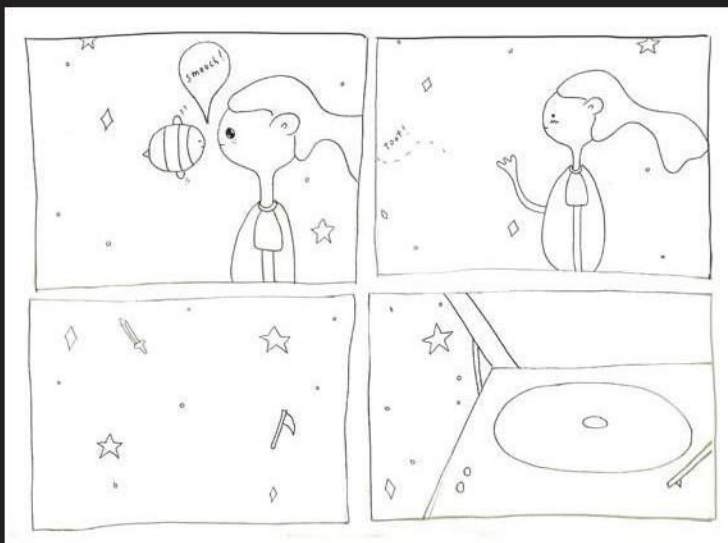


I wrote SJ off as engineer/tech mogul paradise and suburban hell a long time ago.

Deep Fried Duck Strips



ARE
ALL CLEAN!



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